we were back at
hotel-starting place
&
i got out & paid him
& patted stiff horse-with-icebeard
"merci!" said Ernest laughing
(for my 10 dollarbill)
chest pounding again
"anytime, just ask for old Ernest"

we bid farewell &
when i walked away
i couldn't even
feel
my
feet

— S. A. Osterlund

Ashland, Ohio

Ivan and Ellen

—for Jerome Rothenberg

The first summer fog closing over the Prebilofs
Saw people groping through streets to rejoice
With their friends
"The fog is here," they shouted.
"Good luck to you," Ivan said to the fog.

Ivan was chopping Ellen.
Peering through the fog,
He looked her over. She resembled
Somebody's baggy trousers.
Ivan began to pound harder.
Her bobbing head gazed up at him.
"My eyes are swimming and my brain is all awhirl,"
Ellen said to Ivan.
"Is my back swelling?"
"Looks puffy," answered Ivan.
"Then you ought to stop soon," Ellen suggested.

— Michael Silverton

Brooklyn, New York